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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, August 17, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Tips on August Meals." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Leaflet available: "Ice Creams Frozen Without Stirring."

"My family just won't eat in this hot weather," I heard a woman say the other day. "Just think. I had the best pork chops and fried potatoes and pie fixed the other night, and no one had any appetite."

Menus like clothes need to be modeled to suit the season. Rich meals, especially those containing a good deal of fat are especially unsuited to hot weather. Meals in August -- unless you and your family are living up in the Arctics or in some other chilly clime -- need to feature appetizing, light foods-- fruits, milk and milk drinks, and vegetables, especially in salad. Rich puddings, hearty meats, fried foods, hot breads, and so on may well be omitted on these days when the mercury climbs high.

The housewife can save herself a great deal of work in summer by forethought in planning and preparing her meals. She can plan simple meals several days ahead which include some foods which may be cooked in advance. And, of course, she will prepare as much of the meal as possible in the morning, when it is cool, and tuck it away in the refrigerator until it is time for luncheon or dinner. When she is cooking vegetables, she will cook an extra amount for a salad or a creamed dish next day. It's usually a waste of fuel -- and an uncomfortably hot waste, too -- to have to cook at each meal both in and out of the oven using all parts of the stove. It saves fuel, time and energy and is far more comfortable to concentrate on one spot. If you are to use the oven for one dish, why not fill it to capacity and have an oven-baked meal? Oh, yes, and plan one-dish meals whenever you can.

The looks of the food counts, too, in making meals appetizing in hot weather. Cool-looking meals do appeal to the eye of both husbands and children. A crisp, green salad, a dish of cool colorful relishes like radishes, or a gelatin mold -- these affect the eye pleasantly on hot days. You know how much more attractive a simple but light and airy dress looks on a summer day than the most elaborate and rich silk Paris gown. Well, I always think the same principle holds with food. And the appearance of the table and the way the food is served counts too. Fresh, dainty table linen, shining glassware and colorful china with maybe a simple little bouquet of flowers from the garden for a centerpiece -- well, all these things help revive appetites.



Some people prefer a cold-plate dinner and an iced drink to any other menu on a hot day. A jellied salad -- perhaps jellied fish or vegetables, some relishes and an iced drink with some chilled fruit for dessert.

Here is an evening meal suggested by the Menu Specialist for a blistering hot day.

Jellied tuna fish or salmon salad; Sliced home-grown tomatoes; Crisp Potato chips; Hot rolls and butter; Iced tea or a fruit drink; and Sliced peaches for dessert.

Easy for the cook, you see, since there's only one item to heat -- the rolls. Rolls, she says, can be heated in a closely covered kettle over a low flame with an asbestos mat under the kettle to help distribute the heat evenly and slowly. The salad can be prepared in the cool of the morning. Just get out the green cookbook and you can make it up in a very short time right after breakfast.

Other tempting cold menus may be built around cold cuts of meat or chicken salad, or deviled eggs.

But how about hot meals suitable for August?

"Some of us feel that our digestions work better with something warm to cheer them," says the Menu Specialist. There are a number of cooked hot dishes that are quite as appetizing as chilled ones. I heard a woman say the other day that she needs something hot at every meal, even if it is nothing more than a cup of piping hot tea.

So here's a meal for an August luncheon or supper: Baked tomatoes and ham; Creamed lima beans; Tart jelly; Crisp radishes; and, for dessert, Honey ball melon with lemon. No salad is needed with this menu since it contains tomatoes, radishes and a raw fruit dessert.

Now we'll have the recipe for ham and tomatoes -- and that will be all we'll say about August meals this morning.

First the ingredients. Here they are, ready to go in your notebook:

A slice of ham, cut 1/2 inch thick,  
4 firm ripe tomatoes,  
Salt,  
Pepper,  
1 tablespoon of sugar, and  
Buttered bread crumbs.

Six ingredients. I'll list them again. (REPEAT)





Cover the slice of ham with water and bring it to the boiling point. Pour off the water, cut the ham in pieces for serving. Cook it until it is well-browned on both sides. Then place it in a baking dish. Now cover the ham with slices of tomatoes, and season them with salt and pepper and sugar, if desired. Sprinkle buttered breadcrumbs over the tomatoes. Cover them, and cook forty-five minutes or an hour in a moderate oven. When the ham is tender, remove the top of the baking dish and allow the breadcrumbs to brown. Garnish the dish with chopped parsley and serve from the dish.

Speaking of tomatoes, reminds me to remind you that fried tomatoes are one of the best dishes for this time of year. Did you know that either green or ripe tomatoes may be used for frying? Slice them, dip the slices in beaten egg and then fine crumbs and they will fry -- or I should properly say saute -- beautifully.

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Tomorrow: "Canning Corn."

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